

Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC)

Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)

Virginia Emergency Response Team (VERT)

WISE COUNTY/TOWN OF BIG STONE GAP WATER SHORTAGE

SITUATION REPORT # 1

1400 Hours October 8, 2005

WEATHER

Forecast:

Mostly cloudy across the state today with high temperatures in the mid 60's to mid 70's. Winds will be variable at 5-15 mph. There is a 100% chance of precipitation across the state, with the exception of Southwest Virginia, where there is only a 33% chance of precipitation.

A Flood Watch is in effect for most of Virginia, except Southwest Virginia, through Sunday Morning, October 9, 2005.

A Flood Warning is in effect for Arlington County and the City of Alexandria until 4:00 p.m. this afternoon (Saturday, October 08, 2005).

EXECUTIVE ACTION

EOC Activation:

The Virginia VEOC is at Increased Readiness condition and augmented with additional staffing.

State of Emergency:

On October 7, 2005, Governor Mark R. Warner declared a state of emergency to exist for Wise County and the Town of Big Stone Gap to assist these localities in responding to a critical water shortage. Governor Warner directed appropriate assistance be rendered by agencies of the state government to respond to needs in Wise County and the Town of Big Stone Gap to alleviate adverse conditions created by the water shortage.

The Governor directed limited activation of the Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC) and the Virginia Emergency Response Team (VERT) to coordinate the provision of assistance to the impacted localities. The Governor also directed that the Virginia National Guard be called forth to state duty to assist in providing such aid. Governor Warner authorized the Departments of State Police, Transportation, and Motor Vehicles to grant temporary overweight, over width, registration, or license exemptions to all carriers transporting essential commodities in and through any area of the Commonwealth in order to support the emergency conditions, regardless of their point of origin or destination.

Protective Actions:

Local Situation: Water levels are at a critical low in the Town of Big Stone Gap. The reservoir that supplies the Town's water is at 5.2 feet, up .2 foot from Friday, October 7. The Town of Big Stone Gap received .56 of an inch of rain over the previous 24-hour period. The Town of Big Stone Gap implemented mandatory water conservation measures on September 27. These conservation measures require businesses to reduce water consumption by 50% and residences by 25%. Businesses were also required to submit a water conservation plan of action to town officials. The Town of Big Stone Gap is monitoring and spot-checking water meters to ensure compliancy with conservation measures. Impacted in addition to businesses and residences of Big Stone Gap are: Wellmont Lonesome Pine Hospital, Wallen's Ridge State Prison, Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy Offices (DMME), Mountain Empire Community College, Powell Valley Primary, Middle and High Schools, Heritage Hall Nursing Home, 20 food facilities, two motels and a campground.

Mountain Empire Community College and the DMME are expected to be the first areas without water by Thursday, October 13, followed secondly by Big Stone Gap Heights Sub Division and neighboring sub divisions and an apartment complex.

Local EOC Activations: None

Local Emergency Declared: Wise County declared a local emergency on 09-26-05.

Evacuations: None

Schools Closed: None

OPERATIONS SECTIONS

State Warning Point:

Receive and disseminate information from Wise County and the Town of Big Stone Gap. Monitoring weather conditions across the Commonwealth.

STATE AGENCIES

Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)

VDEM Hazardous Materials Officer coordinating with Wise County, the Town of Big Stone Gap, and state/local agencies to assist with identifying needed resources and developing plan of action. VDEM Local Support Services Division Director will deploy to Wise County on Monday, October 10 to provide additional support. The Public Affairs Division is working on a combined media campaign to alert the community of the need to conserve water. VDEM Legislative Liaison is providing information to local General Assembly members representing the locality. VEOC is coordinating requests for assistance from the locality and state agencies and compiling a list of available resources. VEOC is facilitating conference calls with the locality and state agencies.

Virginia Department of Health (VDH)

Office of Drinking Water Programs is working with local and state officials to identify and utilize alternate water supply sources. VDH is evaluating alternative sources of non-potable water for sanitary purposes, so that potable water can be reserved for consumption. VDH will test and assist with sanitation of new water line installation from Norton to Big Stone Gap. VDH is working as mediation/liaison between various entities to keep communication lines open and the public informed. VDH will work with food vendor sites set up at Mountain Empire Community College during the Fall Festival to ensure sanitation of facilities and employee health.

Virginia Department of Mental Health (VDMH)

Working with the Virginia Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VVOAD) and other agencies to identify possible special needs in the community.

Virginia National Guard (VNG)

Beginning preparations for notification for personnel and mobilizing equipment to assist with water distribution in Wise County. VNG has 34 trucks available to haul packaged water and are identifying available resources to store potable water at fixed facility distribution points.

Virginia Department of Corrections (VDOC)

The VDOC has personnel and equipment on stand-by to assist with water distribution and other commodities, if necessary. VDOC has a tanker that is available to haul water. Wallen's Ridge State Prison is entirely off the Big Stone Gap water supply, and is currently bringing in 90,000 gallons of water per day, with an average use of 35-40,000 gallons per day on non-shower days and 60,000 on shower days. Inmates are issued disposable washcloths for hand-washing and bottled water is being distributed.

Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)

VDOT deployed 2 portable message boards on Friday evening, October 7 to support the public information effort.

LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Region IV:

Wise County and Big Stone Gap are seeking alternative water sources. They are working on Norton-Big Stone Gap service line to pump water over the mountain from Norton to Big Stone Gap. If water testing and sanitation results are good, water may be available Monday or Tuesday, October 10 or October 11. Daily meetings are being conducted at Wise County Health Department with local/state agencies. Increased local/state representation is expected at Tuesday's meeting, to include Department of Social Services, Ministerial Association, County Mapping/GIS Department, Sheriff's Department, Mountain Empire Older Citizens Agency, and Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) and Community Emergency Response Team (CERT).

Mountain Empire Community College will host the annual Fall Festival during the weekend period beginning October 15. Planning for portable restroom facilities and hand-washing stations or hand sanitizers at the event is a priority for the week beginning Oct. 12.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Virginia Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VVOAD)

VVOAD is working with the faith-based community and civic organizations to identify available resources and collection points within the faith-based community. VVOAD will send list of available resources and coordinate with the VEOC for distribution of available commodities. VVOAD is also working with Health and Human Services and VEOC to identify special needs.

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